

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 26, 42, 76, 77, 83-85, 87, 89, 91, 94-96, and 99 are amended, and claims 1-25, 27-32, 34, 37-40, 43-47, 49-72, 86, 88, and 93 are now or were previously canceled. Claims 26, 33, 35, 36, 41, 42, 48, 73-85, 87, 89-92, and 94-99 are now pending in the application. Applicants respectfully request reexamination and reconsideration of the application.

Initially, Applicants note that claims 93-99 were not rejected and are therefore presumably allowable. Applicants have rewritten claims 94, 95, and 99 in independent form. (Claim 93 has been canceled.) Claims 94, 95, and 99, as well as claims 96-98 (which depend from claim 95) should therefore be in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action dated April 4, 2006, claims 26, 32-36, 41-43, 48, 73-85, and 87-92 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as obvious in view of US Patent No. 5,810,609 to Faraci et al. ("Faraci") in combination with one or more of US Patent No. 5,632,631 to Fjeldstad ("Fjelstad"), U.S. Patent No. 4,553,192 to Babuka ("Babuka"), US Patent No. 5,180,482 to Abys et al. ("Abys"), or U.S. Patent No. 5,476,818 to Yanof ("Yanof"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Independent claims 26 and 42 include "microelectronic probes" that have contact tips for contacting the terminals of semiconductor dies, which as is known in the field, include integrated microelectronic circuits. The test apparatus of claims 26 and 42 are thus configured with micro sized probes for contacting micro sized terminals of micro sized circuits. Claims 26 and 42 recite that the contact tips of the "microelectronic probes" comprise "a palladium cobalt alloy." In not rejecting claims 93-99—some of which recite micro sized pitches or use with semiconductor dies—the PTO seems to have agreed that the combination of Faraci and Abys is not applicable to micro sized probes for probing micro sized terminals. Independent claims 26 and 24, as well as their dependent claims, should therefore be in condition for allowance.

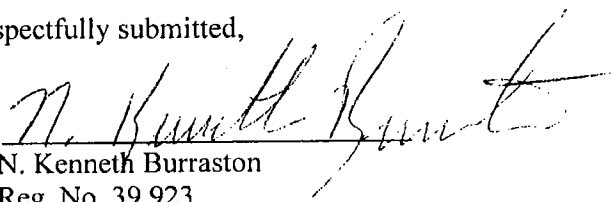
Moreover, it would not have been obvious to combine Abys with Faraci as proposed in the Office Action. In rejecting former claims 32 and 43, the PTO acknowledged that Faraci does not disclose the use of a palladium cobalt alloy. To make up for this deficiency in Faraci, the PTO alleged that Abys discloses the use of palladium cobalt and it would have been obvious to combine Abys with Faraci. As argued in the previous Response, however, Abys does not teach or suggest using palladium cobalt in contacts designed for microelectronic circuits like Faraci. Abys' teachings are limited to relatively large electrical connectors, like relay contacts and

switches or the macro sized contact shown in Figure 1. (Abys col. 1, lines 19-21.) In fact, the palladium cobalt disclosed in Abys must be shaped using stamping operations. (Abys col. 2, lines 15-18.) Without question, stamping operations cannot be used in making Faraci's microcontacts 190, 200, which are designed for use with a microelectronic device 265 and must therefore be made using delicate lithographic techniques like those used to form integrated circuits on semiconductor dies. (See Faraci Figures 6A-6E.) Abys' does not explain how or even hint that its stamped palladium cobalt could or should be used with microelectronic contacts (like Faraci's) fabricated using delicate semiconductor fabrication techniques. Indeed, it would not be possible to apply Abys' teachings regarding shaping palladium cobalt by stamping to use with the micro sized, lithographically produced structures and circuits of Faraci. Therefore, it would not have been obvious to combine Abys with Faraci as proposed in the Office Action, and the rejection of claims 26 and 42 should accordingly be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all of the claims are allowable and the application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a discussion with Applicants' attorney would be helpful, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (801) 323-5934.

Respectfully submitted,

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